

*family self-help psychiatry*

BApK – German Federal  
Association of Relatives of the  
Mentally Ill

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Cooperation agreements between clinics for psychiatry, psychotherapy and neurology /  
psychiatric departments in general hospitals and the regional associations of relatives of the  
mentally ill

Dear Sir or Madam,

As the German Federal Association of Relatives of the Mentally Ill (BApK), we are working  
towards a situation in hospital and outpatient psychiatric treatment where the experiences  
and views of parents, spouses & partners or other close relatives and persons of trust are  
systematically taken into account. The aim is to ensure the cooperation of all those involved,  
based upon the agreement of the patient. This also includes cooperation and an exchange of  
information with relatives, provided of course the patient agrees.

As the German Federal Association, we have provided information at various events of the  
local associations and specialist committees, predominantly in the form of speeches. In  
many cases we have received your spontaneous support for this. For this we offer our  
thanks.

With this letter we enclose a model agreement which follows through on these goals. It is  
aimed at medical and non-medical directors of hospitals and specialist departments and at  
outpatient psychiatric facilities.

We would ask you to show the enclosure to your association and discuss it at management  
level, then let us know whether you are in agreement or if you have any criticisms or  
suggestions.

At the beginning of 2017 we will in a second step make a direct approach to all psychiatric  
hospitals and specialist psychiatry departments with a similar letter. Then we would ask the  
relevant management committees, if they agree, to sign the agreement on the letterhead of  
their institute. Then the local or regional associations of relatives of the mentally ill are also

to be added as partners. If there is no local association of relatives, we would ask hospitals, etc. to return the signed agreement to us in Bonn. We will pass them on to the regional association for relatives of the mentally ill of the relevant federal state. The hospitals, etc. will then also receive a copy signed by the relatives self-help group.

We are aware that in many hospitals, departments and facilities for outpatient psychiatry there is a range of services for relatives, such as the involvement of relatives in departmental concepts, a range of information offers for relatives, etc. It is our intention to follow this good example, develop it and incorporate it as a fixed component of the quality standard as part of a mutual declaration of will.

We would be delighted if you would recommend your members to sign in an appropriate letter.

The PDF version of the text can be found under:

[www.psychiatrie.de/bapk/Kooperationsvereinbarungen/](http://www.psychiatrie.de/bapk/Kooperationsvereinbarungen/)

This or similarly worded agreements have now been implemented in around 15 clinics. This includes the hospitals of the kbo group in the administrative district of Upper Bavaria, see:

[www.apk-muenchen.de/ApKKooperationen/ApK\\_kbo.pdf](http://www.apk-muenchen.de/ApKKooperationen/ApK_kbo.pdf)

the district hospital of Lohr a. Main/ Unterfranken, the Schloss Werneck clinic for psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychosomatics, the Würzburg university hospital, Ingolstadt hospital and others, including in Hamburg. In other clinics corresponding agreements are in the process of finalisation or will be signed in 2017.

The above initiative of our association forms part of our project sponsored by the German Ministry of Health: "The relationship between relatives and professionals – agreements between clinics and relatives (associations/groups) for the regulation of contractual quality assurance in psychiatry".

We wish you a pleasant Christmas period and a good start to the New Year and remain

Yours sincerely

Gudrun Schliebener  
Chair

Christian Zechert  
German Ministry of Health BApK Project

Enclosure: Model Agreement

A similar letter has also been sent to:

ACKPA: Working Group of Senior Physicians of Psychiatric and Psychotherapy Clinics in General Hospitals, Potsdam, Dr. Christian Kieser

BDK e.V.: Federal Conference of Directors – Association of Medical Directors of Clinics for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Ingolstadt, Prof. Dr. Thomas Pollmächer

BFLK e.V.: Federal Association of Managerial Nursing Staff in Psychiatry, Augsburg, Georg Oppermann

DGPPN e.V.: German Association for Psychiatry Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, Berlin, Dr. Iris Hauth

VKD e.V.: Association of German Hospital Directors, specialist group for psychiatry, Langenfeld, Holger Höhmann

and the registered associations

APK: Action for the Mentally Ill, Bonn, Peter Weiß, MdB

Dachverband Gemeindepsychiatrie e.V.: Umbrella Organisation for Community Psychiatry, Cologne, Wolfgang Faulbaum-Decke

DGSP: German Association for Social Psychiatry, Cologne, Christel Achberger

The regional associations of the relatives of the mentally ill will receive a copy of our letter with a request to inform their members and local groups.